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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/14/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV YI CA

SUBJECT: CANADA ON KOSOVO

REF: A. STATE 165486

1B. STATE 165453

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) According to Department of Foreign Affairs Director General for Central, East, and Southern Europe Robert Hage, Canada will not be among either the first or the last to recognize Kosovo following a unilateral declaration of independence. While the government has not yet reached a formal decision, this will be his recommendation to Foreign Minister Bernier in the coming days, which he fully expects Bernier to accept. He noted Prime Minister's personal interest in this issue.

12. (C) In a meeting with PolMinCouns on December 14, Hage underscored that Canada's hope all along had been for a negotiated solution, while acknowledging that at present there was only at best a "slim prospect" that this could still happen if the UN Security Council decided on December 19 to take further action (while admitting this also seemed unlikely). He noted the arguments that this situation was indeed *sui generis*, but commented that inevitably it would set a precedent of kinds. He highlighted that, in Canada, there were special domestic concerns on this issue, even though the situation of Quebec was entirely dissimilar. He predicted that the international community would continue to play an important role in Kosovo for the foreseeable future and that a new pledging conference was inevitable.

13. (C) Canada is now grappling with how it will eventually cover Kosovo diplomatically, since there are no DFAIT officials in Pristina nor any plans to open an office, according to Hage. The Canadian Ambassador in Belgrade is eager to handle, but Canada doubts that the Serbs will allow this. He predicted difficulties in Kosovo's admission into the UN and the OSCE, or even into international financial institutions, due to Russian and Serb opposition.

14. (C) Hage added that Minister Bernier will be prepared to explain Canada's position on Kosovo to Secretary Rice on an if asked basis during their meeting on December 20, but does not plan to raise himself.

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